

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

UNCLAS RANGOON 000366

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

STATE FOR EAP/BCLTV; PACOM FOR FPA

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: PGOV PHUM BM NLD

SUBJECT: RELEASED STUDENT LEADERS ADD SPICE TO NLD

RESISTANCE DAY EVENT

REF: A. RANGOON 351

B. RANGOON 345

C. RANGOON 224

D. 04 RANGOON 1499

¶1. (U) Summary: The NLD hosted on March 27 its annual commemoration of Resistance Day, attended by several hundred party members, supporters, and diplomats. An otherwise routine event was given a significant boost by the dramatic arrival and attendance of a group of recently released student activists, including two of Burma's most famous dissidents, Min Ko Naing and Ko Ko Gyi, leaders of the 1988 democracy uprising. In a public statement, the NLD expressed support for "genuine and politically meaningful dialogue;" called for the reopening of party offices; and demanded the immediate release of ASSK, U Tin Oo, SNLD Chairman U Hkun Htun Oo, SNLD Secretary Sai Nyunt Lwin, other ethnic leaders, and all political prisoners. End Summary.

¶2. (U) The National League for Democracy (NLD) on March 27 commemorated Burma's 60th Anti-Fascist Resistance Day (which the SPDC renamed Armed Forces Day, ref A) at the party's Rangoon headquarters. In contrast to the regime's over-the-top, heavily militarized celebrations, which included a parade of nearly 8,000 troops (septel Rangoon DAO), the NLD commemoration was a low-key event that drew about 250 members and supporters. Party leaders delivered several speeches that evoked the historical roots behind the holiday and criticized the military for its 1962 coup d'etat against an elected government and its subsequent abuses. Representatives of the U.S., UK, French, and Japanese Embassies attended the event, which fell this year on Easter Sunday.

¶3. (U) In its general statement, the NLD's Central Executive Committee (CEC) expressed the party's view that a democratic state and economic development can only be achieved through negotiations, "meaning genuine and politically meaningful dialogue." For a successful dialogue, the NLD expressed four conditions: a) the immediate and unconditional release of NLD General Secretary Aung San Suu Kyi and Vice Chairman U Tin Oo; b) the immediate and unconditional release of SNLD Chairman U Hkun Htun Oo, SNLD Secretary Sai Nyunt Lwin, and other detained ethnic leaders; c) the reopening of NLD state, divisional, and township offices; d) the immediate and unconditional release of all political prisoners.

¶4. (SBU) The NLD's otherwise routine commemoration was given a significant boost by the dramatic arrival of ten former student activist leaders, most of whom the regime has released from prison in recent weeks and months. NLD members and supporters were clearly thrilled by attendance of the student leaders, giving them a round of applause and special seating. Among the released prisoners who attended were 1988-1989 student leaders Min Ko Naing (released on November 19, 2004 after 15 years in prison, ref D) and Ko Ko Gyi (released on March 17 after 13 years in prison, ref B). Emboffs spoke with each of the activists, who appeared to be in very good physical shape and were making their first public appearance since release from prison.
Martinez